

CLAIM AMENDMENTS:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claims 1-15 (Cancelled)

16. (Currently amended) A network services method comprising:
receiving a request for connection to a video content source operable to output an
information stream;
determining an address for the video content source;
initiating formation of at least a portion of a point-to-point protocol communication link
between a user device and ~~with~~ the video content source;
tracking a metric associated with communication of the information stream; and
generating a billing record at least partially based upon the metric.

17. (Currently amended) The method of claim 16, further comprising:
notifying ~~[[a]]~~ an user entity initiating sending the request of a cost associated with
accessing the video content source; and
accepting a payment input from the ~~user~~ entity initiating the request indicating a method
of paying the cost prior to initiating formation of the at least a portion of the
point-to-point communication link.

18. (Original) The method of claim 16, further comprising:
receiving a spoken directive from a calling party; and
converting the spoken directive into the request for connection.

19. (Currently amended) The method of claim 16, further comprising:
maintaining a list of available content sources, the list including the video content source
and a unique address for the video content source;
notifying [[a]] an user entity initiating sending the request of a cost associated with
accessing the video content source; and
communicatively coupling the user device and the video content source with at least one
point-to-point protocol over Ethernet link and at least one point-to-point protocol
over asynchronous transfer mode link.

20. (Original) The method of claim 16, wherein the metric is connection duration, further
comprising:
tracking information throughput;
tracking quality of service; and
tracking peak bandwidth.

21. (Currently amended) The method of claim 16, wherein the output stream comprises a
variable bit rate stream, the method further comprising converting the variable bit rate stream
into a constant bit rate stream.

22. (Currently amended) The method of claim 16, further comprising sending an output
request to the video content source, the output request operable to cause the video content source
to toggle from a no output state to an output state.

23. (Original) The method of claim 16, wherein at least a portion of the request
comprises a format selected from the group consisting of a dual tone multi-frequency signal, a
TCP/IP packet, and a voice signal.

24. (Currently amended) A computer-readable medium having computer-readable data executable instructions to:

receive a request for connection to a video content source operable to output an information stream;
determine an address for the video content source;
initiate formation of at least a portion of a point-to-point communication link with between a user device and the video content source;
issue a notification of a cost associated with accessing the video content source[[]]; [[to]]
accept a prepayment input indicating a method of paying the cost;
track a metric associated with communication of the information stream; and
generate a billing record at least partially based upon the metric.

25. (Currently amended) The method of claim 16, further comprising:

sending data indicating a plurality of connection options to the video content source, the plurality of connection options ~~comprising~~ including a managed point-to-point protocol communication link; and
receiving a selection of the managed point-to-point protocol communication link connection option.

26. (Currently amended) The method of claim 16, wherein the request is received at a network management system, and the method further comprising retrieving connection information from an information store maintained by the network management system, wherein the connection information includes the address of the video content source and at least one connection rule to connect to the video content source.

27. (Withdrawn) A network services system comprising:

an information store comprising connection information to initiate connections to content sources, wherein the connection information includes a unique address and a connection rule associated with a video content source;

an access engine operable to receive a signal indicative of a user input from a user device, the user input comprising an alias mapable to the unique address and indicating a request for an information stream output by the video content source; and

a services engine communicatively coupled to the access engine and further communicatively coupled to the information store, the services engine operable to retrieve the connection rule from the information store and to initiate establishment of at least a portion of a point to point protocol communication link between the user device and the video content source in accordance with the connection rule, the services engine further operable to track a metric associated with the point to point protocol communication link.

28. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 27, wherein the information store includes a first collection of connection information for connecting to a first plurality of network devices associated with a local managed network, and wherein the information store further includes a second collection of connection information for connecting to a second plurality of network devices associated with a remote managed network.

29. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 28, further comprising:

an authentication engine communicatively coupled to the access engine and operable to consider an initial set of credentials received from an administrator of the remote managed network having authority to access the second collection of connection information; and

an authorization engine operable to enable access to the second collection of connection information in response to authentication of the initial set of credentials.

30. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 27, wherein the services engine is further operable to send a signal to the user device indicative of a plurality of available connection options to the video content source, wherein the plurality of available connection options includes a managed point to point protocol communication link option and further includes a packet switched public Internet link option, and wherein the services engine is further operable to receive a signal indicative of a selection of a communication option from the user device.

31. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 27, wherein the services engine is further operable to reroute connections to achieve load balancing in a local managed network.

32. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 27, wherein the services engine is further operable to reject a request for connection to the video content source when a number of simultaneous connections to the video content source is not less than a threshold determined by an administrator of a local managed network.

33. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 27, wherein the connection rule is a real time transport protocol/real time control protocol rule.

34. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 27, wherein the connection rule indicates a protocol supported by a remote network associated with the video content source.

35. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 27, wherein the metric is selected from the group consisting of connection duration, quality of service, and peak bandwidth.

36. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 35, further comprising a billing engine operable to initiate generation of an invoice at least partially based upon the metric.

37. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 36, further comprising a pre-payment engine operable to inform the user of a cost associated with the point to point protocol communication link and to accept a payment input from the user indicating a method of paying the cost.

38. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 27, wherein the video content source is further operable to output the information stream in response to a delivery request and to discontinue output of the information stream in response to a cease request, and wherein the services engine is further operable to initiate sending of the delivery request and the cease request.

39. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 27, further comprising:
a device engine associated with the access engine, the device engine operable to
determine an access device type used by a user; and
a format converter associated with the access engine, the format converter operable to
translate at least a portion of the information stream into a signal playable by the
access device type.

40. (Currently amended) A network services method comprising:
receiving a request to connect to a video content source operable to output an information
stream;
sending data indicating a plurality of connection options to connect to the video content
source, the plurality of connection options ~~comprising~~ including a connection to
the video content source via a point-to-point protocol communication link;
receiving a selection of the point-to-point protocol communication link connection
option; and
initiating formation of at least a portion of the point-to-point protocol communication link
between a user device and ~~with~~ the video content source.